

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media concentration

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. However, the FCC has not generally been enforcing those rules.

Today, the large media corporations are a lot more focused on propaganda than journalism. "News Central", controlled by out-of-state executives that aren't part of the affected communities, choose what is viewed ... dictating the main terms of political discourse and "news" without regard to local community interests. They also explicitly avoid locally significant issues that are contrary to the financial interests of those executives and owners.

Those kinds of action, exemplified by Sinclair, are antithetical to the principles of public interest. When they are applied industry-wide, by an increasingly narrow set of interests, they significantly undermine the ability of political processes to maintain the kind of nation laid out by the US Constitution: one where journalism serves as a watchdog on the government, not its lapdog.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard, and needs to be a lot more proactive about increasing local control.

Thank you.